لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

Vafa 1348—July 1969

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EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of world Reformer to combat the current of anti-religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world; and that he, the Promised Messiah, had come instead.

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The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war - like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, goodwill and self-less fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Haji Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin, Khalifatul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifatul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifatul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named, with one accord, Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, the late Khalifatul Masih's son and the Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifatul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities and aims and objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to

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It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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Living Contact with Living God

In his address delivered at Rabwah on Feb. 28, 1969, the Khalifatul Masih III said :

"According to the Holy Quran, Divine contact is of three kinds, one is universal in which men and plants and animals of every species, in fact all created beings are co-sharers. It is in reference to this universal relationship that the Holy Quran has in various verses pointed out that God is encompassing everything through power and knowledge and not a leaf of a tree drops but by His will and is in His knowledge and the grains that disappear from the ken of men into earth are within the purview of His vision. Nothing is hidden from Him. He has told man that He knows his inner secrets and his deep thoughts. Dozens of Quranic verses emphasize this universal type of Divine relationship. For, it is a characteristic of the intimacy of His knowledge. We can call this relationship, the

relationship of creativeness, of sustenance and of Providence; for, only the Creator can be the most closely related person to His creation, whose Hand made by His power everything and granted to His creatures their special properties, He alone knows them and their characteristics and is obviously closest to them. None other than the Author of creation can have comprehensive knowledge of His creation. This is a truth that no sensible person would question. Though man has learnt a great deal with advancement in scientific research, yet wise scientists feel that they are hardly on the brink of the sea of knowledge. No doubt man can learn something about the properties of things through His God-given insight but true and comprehensive knowledge and a full understanding of the properties of objects is beyond his reach.

Again it is true that God did not leave off His creatures after fashioning them. On the contrary, every kind of life, every entity and the constancy in its properties depend for sustenance on God. His powerful Hand is the prop of every property, of every object all the time and that is why it is holding out. Once this close relationship is changed into estrangement and remains no longer the supporting arm of an object, it perishes. God therefore not only created things, He granted them certain properties, and in addition introduced the law of evolution with the purpose of advancing everything to its perfection through His providence.

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In short, everything is totally dependent on Divine support because of its having been created and because of the sustenance it receives for its survival and is incapable of development without His providence, still less of reaching its perfection within the orbit of its properties. These three Divine attributes, of creativeness, of sustenance and of providence, through their manifestation, unfold a vista of universal relationship to Divine source observable in the panorama of creation, everything is close to Him because of its being His work, because of His support, and because of His providence. For, God draws near His creatures

because He is their creator, their maintainer and their Lord, so that all creatures may serve the purpose of their respective existence.

This kind of relationship of closeness is shared by all men and other creatures alike, as much by an ox as by a tree, a stone or a human being. For, distance from Him means death and estrangement from Him perdition. In brief, all that has not been subjected to death and decay carries eloquent evidence of the fact that it is partaking of the universal relationship with God. Though men and other beings share alike this closeness, yet human being has been so constituted that he cannot content himself with this universal type of relationship with the Divine and has a yearning for especially close relationship. But before attaining to this type of closeness, there intervenes another kind of relationship and this kind of relationship exclusively concerns human beings. This second kind of relationship is the incidence of Divine anger.

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God made man to serve Him and to cultivate close contact with Him and in order to achieve this end to seek knowledge and power from Him to so illumine his qualities with Divine light that he reaches his goal of proximity to God for which He created him. But some men travel away from this goal and when they move away from God, He pursues them and forces them back through a close impact of His anger. As in the distant past squirts rained heavily on runaway slaves, so does His wrath overtake such deserters, in order to provide them with an occasion for their return to Him. It is to this type of proximity that God has pointed in the chapter Al-Baqra of the Holy Quran in the words :

واللہ محیط بالکافرین

i.e. He is encompassing all who disbelieve in Him and through lack of knowledge of His person and His attributes travel away from Him, to make them the targets of His wrath and pours His anger on them to reclaim them.

This type of Divine relationship involves man alone, a

very unfortunate man whom Allah created for a life in His merciful dispensation but who through ingratitude and lack of appreciation, took to ways of ignorance that led him astray and away from God. This type of closeness can neither be a matter of pleasure nor of pride for any man - that Allah drew near to him only to birch him, in His wrath. But this kind of closeness was necessary. If God had not been displeased with him, man would not know what had offended His Lord, leading to the forfeiture of His Mercy.

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The Proximity of Compassion

The third kind of Divine proximity is characterized by His compassion, when in order to show him His love, God draws close to man, takes him for His friend, even His loved one, sets afoot a great revolution in the world bringing a change in hearts, sending them scurrying towards Him as slaves. This type of closeness has many grades. Its biggest insignia is that the subject does not experience only the flashes of Divine nearness; he also experiences manifestations of Divine acceptance.

I have just said that Allah is close to every object, but all creatures other than man lack the sense and knowledge that Divine light, beauty, providence, lordship and care are their lot. He is close to them but He need not show through them flashes of His approbation, for the simple reason that they have not been created for the purpose. The second kind of Divine proximity being related to man alone is not one of love and expression of Divine approbation but of anger and chastisement. It is the third kind of Divine nearness that man has been created to aspire and work for. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and his companions were a party of people who faced immense hardships but never deserted God, for, they had experienced His expressions of closeness and approbation: they had felt in their lives living signs of the Living God and had developed personal attachment to Him in their hearts. The Promised Messiah (peace be on

him) says that if such people are ground fine and then squeezed through a crusher, then their squash - yield will consist only of one substance, love of God. These people went through every kind of tribulation but their relationship with God remained intact ; they never wavered in their loyalty to the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be on him), for, they had experienced the flashes of Divine nearness and of Divine loving care. No people can ever offer such sacrifices without such experience, as were offered by the Companions. There was an attachment, a love, a fire aflame in the heart, to win the pleasure of God, to cement relationship with Him and human nature can hardly find fulfilment without it. Even those who do not enjoy this kind of closeness to God also experience the flashes of His proximity gifted as they are with understanding and spiritual insight. Even trees are subject to flashes of this kind, only they are not gifted with consciouness and therefore incapable of feeling their impact.

They also witness the manifestations of God's glory when they see a people afflicted with a visitation from Him but they have no way of knowing that they have found favor with their Lord. One can know that only when one experiences manifestation of His merciful nearness and His proximity through His response to one's prayers.

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The Prophets and their loyal communities not only experienced the manifestations of Divine nearness but also of His responsiveness, according to their respective capacities and their times; they had forged a living contact with their Creator. They could not have been prompted to offer sacrifices without such experience. The very object of man's existence and of the appointment of Prophets could never have been served. When we take a look at the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) we see a vast ocean of obedience offered to God Who is at once so near and at the same time so responsive that they submit their petitions and anon He answers back. They begged and He, the *Mujib* God,

granted. *Mujib* carries the twin sense, answerer of prayer in words and also in the shape of grants. What they asked was His favor and His love and whatever He granted them was His favor and His love. He told the whole of His creation that they (the companions of the Holy Prophet) were His favorite servants and that all should dedicate themselves to their service. This is the distinguishing feature of the true religion and of the true believers. One who says that Islam and the Holy Prophet were commissioned to forge a link between man and God in terms of His attribute of closeness and not of both closeness and responsiveness has failed to appreciate the content of Islam and the station of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) nor has he aught idea of the purpose of life.

All religions stood for forging man's link with God, the near and the God the answerer of prayer. This objective found its fullest fulfilment through the appointment of the Holy Prophet (may blessings of God and His peace be on him) i.e. perfect identification of man with Allah is possible through the Holy Prophet alone ; it was not possible before through the earlier prophets. His true followers have been enjoying the presence of God, the near, and of God, the answerer of prayers, through the centuries that have gone by and that is why they are so dedicated to Him and this will go on till the end of days.

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Now a question would arise : what doctrinal teaching has Islam given in this behalf ? In the short verse, that I have just read two facts have been pointed up : God says that if you want to forge contact with Him as the near and the answering Lord and want to win His favor, compassion and love, then take to *Istighfar* and *tauba*. Why should one resort to *Istighfar ?* Because man was created for a grand purpose. God granted him two kinds of potential, one for virtue and the other for vice. He had been given the choice and told that he could attain to a high degree of closeness to God by taking to the way that lead to God, by his free volition and through

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offeding sacrifices and that it could not be possible until one had the power to choose freely between two alternatives, the one to do good and the other to transgress. Since the power to act sinfully exposes a natural drawback, the evil-inspiring spirit gets the upper hand and passions run wild. In order to cover this natural weakness, Istighfar comes in useful. Man is not perfect by himself. But he can attain to the perfection he has been created to achieve and in order to do so, he has to seek strength and knowledge from the perfect Being. *Istighfar* teaches us to bend before Him and address to Him "O Lord Thou hast chosen us out of all Thy creatures for attainment to heights where we should enjoy Thy presence, by giving us the power to choose between good and bad actions, leaving it to us to freely choose between the two ways, that by giving up the bad and choosing the good way freely, we could attain to our perfection. Since Thou endowed us with a tendency to sinfulness and as we are weak mortals, we feel we cannot resist the evil promptings and overcome satan until Thou comest to our aid and unless we have the support of Thy Protection. Therefore, pray, grant us Thy support, come to our help, so that human weaknesses are contained and we are immunized from evil temptations. In short, as commanded by God, repeated *Istighfar* draws Divine help, removing all obstacles that block the road to spiritual progress, the soul totally dropping off all evil tendencies and developing instead a tendency to soar higher and higher to spiritual heights, to seek the presence of the Divine.

The second way to God's favor lies through *tauba*. When human frailties are removed, the question arises, can man act virtuously by his own steam or can he force good results of his deeds? Not at all. God enjoins on us an humble and lowly approach to Him and to hasten to the great Maker and when we do so, to seek Him, acting virtuously, keeping ourselves involved in prayers, with our hearts engaged in His remembrance, He will then speed towards us much faster than we did towards Him. *Istighfar* and turning towards God (tauba) are thus two

basic factors leading to attachment with God, the near and God the answerer of prayers. Through Istighfar one gains strength to resist evil temptations. After gaining strength every attempt at virtuous living represents *tauba*. One should feel humble before God and turn to Him with a lowly heart thinking nothing of himself, firmly grounded in the belief with certainty that one can have no power to do any good act without His grace nor can he have the power to bring about good results of his so-called good deeds.

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Nearness of God

Nearness of God or its knowledge or insight into it or arguments favoring it have the sole purpose of motivating in man a search for God, the answerer of prayers. When a man is granted this type of merciful nearness, his prayers are favored with acceptance, his wants met through ways of humbleness and lowly petitions. He gets what he seeks. When such type of contact is established, man finds God nearer to him than any one else and finds Him more powerful and more loving than any one else. Others appear no more than carcases in his sight. For, when he sees the majesty and glory of God with his own eyes, he can see none by Him or beyond Him. For, God is great ; very great indeed. His glory shakes the very foundations of a man's existence. Such a person then totally disregards others and does not take any one into account, any one other than God, even though such persons believe they wield immence power and can destroy the party of Allah. But those who are related to the Divine Jamaat (party) have before their eyes the glory and majesty of Allah. They cannot have recourse to ways that lead astray from Him and inflame His anger and His retribution. They have before their eyes manifestations of His Beauty and Benificence and have no need of any one else. For the gratification of their spiritual yearnings there are the flashes of His Beauty and for the satisfaction of their wants and needs they have the mani-

festation of His Beneficence. There is therefore no room for other than God nor fear of *ghairallah* (other than God). One who finds himself in the lap of God, would he care for the tenderness and warmth of any other lap ? It was because of this that many gave up the laps of their mothers where they had enjoyed both tenderness and warmth in their childhood, for the lap of God. They found His love was greater than even maternal care.

Every member of our community should exert himself to attain to this third category of Divine nearness, the presence of God, appearing to him close, with all His Greatness, Glory, Beauty and Benevolence and of God the Answerer of prayer (Mujib), with all His Power and Might. We can enjoy every kind of spiritual felicity once this state has been achieved and we can be listed among the people who have been referred to in the revelation (to the Promised Messiah).

ينصرك رجال نوحى اليهم من السماء

You shall be granted companions who will be enjoying the favor of God, the Near and Answerer of prayer. It is only then that promises that God made to the Promised Messiah, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of God be on him), shall find their fulfillment in respect of us.

Eng. A.G. Soofi

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Observations of the Promised Messiah :

The Most Righteous Men spoken of as 'Sons' of God

When a man most sincerely and ardently loves God, then God, too, loves him. His popularity is splashed over the whole earth and sincere love of him is engendered in thousands of hearts. He is gifted with a power of attraction, he is granted a light which constantly guides him. When a man sincerely loves God and opts Him above the whole world and the greatness and glory of everything beside God carries no weight with him, while, as a matter of fact, it is nothing more than a dead worm in his sight, then, God, Who sees the innermost recesses of his heart manifests Himself to him. And just as the image of the sun is reflected in a clean mirror, it may metaphorically be said that the sun, which is shining overhead in the sky, is also present in the mirror ; similarly, God manifests Himself to a man whose heart is crystal clear and becomes, as it were, His throne.

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This is the purpose for which man has been created. In previous scriptures where the Righteous people of God have been mentioned as 'Sons' of God, it does not mean that they were the real sons of God, as to call them such is the very negation of faith. God is Holy, He is free from all relationships of sons and daughters. It only means that God reflected Himself in the clean mirror of these righteous people. And the image of a person reflected in the mirror, may metaphorically be called his 'son'. For just as the son is begotten of the father, similarly the image is the exact reproduction of the object itself. Hence the reflection of the manifestation of God in the pure and clean heart of a man is termed as 'son' of the real object.

Eng. Ali Muhammad

The Holy Prophet: Sidelights on his Noble Life

(By A. G. Soofi)

The Prophet never for once believed that he was superior to others. In war and in peace, every time he was a comrade and an equal. There was no special seat for him to sit. He sat among his companions as one of them. A stranger would not know who the chief of the group was. Once during a journey, the companions divided among themselves their respective duties. The Prophet undertook to collect fuel-wood for cooking food. The companions would not have it. They said they would do all the work and serve him. He said he would not like a special treatment "as God loves not one who wants to be above his companions".

During the journey to Badr, Muslims had very few mounts. Three rode a camel turn by turn. The Prophet took his turn like others. The companions insisted that he should ride and they would walk. The Prophet said, "You cannot walk faster than I and I am more anxious to win merit than you".

He shared domestic work with his wives. Ayesha says, "He engaged himself in household chores. He would patch his clothes with his own hands. He would sweep the floor, milk the goats, do shopping, mend his shoes and mend the bucket and tether the camel and give it fodder and join the servant in kneading the dough".

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The slave-women of Medina freely called on him to help them. He would respond to every call.

Hind Ibne Hala, who knew him intimately from early age, says, "He was mild of temper, not harsh; he would insult none; was grateful for smallest service, would not find fault with anything; would eat of whatever was placed before him and pass no remarks. He would be angry only when someone opposed the truth which he supported fully. In his personal affairs he was never angry, nor did he ever take revenge".

Ayesha says of him: "The Prophet would never speak ill of anyone. He would never give evil return for evil and would overlook and forgive. If he had a choice, he would choose the easier thing of the too only if it were not sinful. He would be far from it in that case. He never sought revenge from anyone in personal matters. Whoever broke the law, he was punished under God's law. He never cursed any Muslim by name. He never hit a slave-man or a slave-girl, a woman, a serving-man or an animal. He never turned down a request except when it was improper. He always entered the house smiling. He would never spread out his legs when sitting among friends. He spoke slowly so that if anyone wanted to remember his speech, he could commit it to memory"

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Ali says of the Prophet: "He had a smiling face, was mild of temper, kindly-disposed; neither harsh nor narrow-minded. Would not shout, would not find fault and was not a hard task-master. If he did not like something, he would overlook it. But one who knew him well would understand by his silence. He disliked three things for himself: argument, unnecessary talk, interest in things that did not concern him. In respect of others also he would not have three things: He would not speak ill of them. He would not find fault and would not pry into their private affairs. He would talk only about things that were useful. When he talked, the companions heard silently with their heads bowed down as if birds were perched on them. When he became silent, only then they would talk. When he was addressed, he would listen quietly until the talker had finished. If people laughed over something he too would smile. If an outsider talked in rough tone, he was patient with him. He would not like to hear his own praise. But if anyone thanked him for the good and the gifts he had received from him, he accepted his thanks. He would never interrupt anyone while he talked until he became silent. He was exceedingly generous, most truthful, very kind-hearted and the best company."

Life After Death

English version of a speech delivered in Urdu at the Annual Ahmaddiyya Gathering (December, 1959) by Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan. This translation was made by M.A. Rahman (Karachi) and edited by Prof. Naseer Ahmad Khan (Rabwah).

Next to faith in the existence of God and His unity, the Holy Quran lays the greatest emphasis on belief in 'life after death'. Although belief in God alone covers every aspect of faith, yet the Holy Quran invariably links it with 'belief in the Day of Judgement'. It is clear, therefore, that one cannot have faith in God unless he has faith in 'life after death'. Man cannot comprehend, still less achieve, the object of his life on earth, unless he has faith in 'life after death'. God Almighty says:

'Surely, those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Ṣabians, and the Christians - whoso believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve" (5 : 70).

Again, about one aspect of faith in 'life after death', He says:

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How can you disbelieve in Allah? When you were without life, He gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then restore you to life, then to Him shall you be made to return (2 : 29). In this verse, by saying: و اليه ترجعون "to Him shall you be made to return" God Almighty has, for belief in His existence, put forward faith in 'life after death' as a pre-condition. Again, in the Quran, attention is drawn to the fact that the 'life after death' is the real life and that this earthly life, compared with the one in the hereafter carries little value. It says:

And this life of the world is nothing but a pastime and a sport, and the Home of the Hereafter - that indeed is Life;

if they but knew ! (29 : 65).

Reiterating this very theme, He has said :

Know that the life of this world is only a sport and a pastime, and an adornment, and a source of boasting among yourselves, and of rivalry in multiplying riches and children. *This life* is like the rain vegetation produced whereby rejoices the tiller. Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; then it becomes broken pieces of straw. And in the Hereafter there is severe punishment, and *also* forgiveness from Allah, and His pleasure. And the life of this world is nothing but *temporary* enjoyment of alluring things. (57 : 21) ; and again :

He regulates it all. He clearly explains the Signs, that you may have firm belief in the meeting with your Lord (13 : 3). It is apparent from these verses that the question of life after death is an extremely important and at the same time a very difficult one, for its knowledge cannot be had either through practical experience or observation. The only real and true knowledge of it is by means of Divine revelation. In order that the human mind may comprehend the inevitability of such a life, the revelations have been made in a figurative language and since the very object of a language is the communication and expression of ideas, the Holy Quran has given us many examples and allegories to enable us to understand its true meaning. For this reason God has said :

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And no soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden for them, as a reward for their good works. (32, : 18). Similarly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be upon him) has said :

The fruits of Paradise are such that no human eye has seen their like nor any ear ever heard of them nor the human mind can ever truly comprehend them. Therefore while dealing with the subject of life after death I can at best make an attempt to bring out some important points as clearly as possible. The reader is, therefore, requested to keep three things uppermost in

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his mind so that he may understand the subject better. First of these is that after death material bodies will not be brought to life again. Resurrection does not mean that the dead bodies will be gathered from dust, assembled in different shapes and brought to life again, because they will have accomplished the purpose for which they were made. In fact, it is evident that the body which is made to suit the environment of our earthly abode, after finishing its work, remains behind in this world. Firstly, if there is any 'life after death' and if it is not to be lived again in this world but in some other abode, then obviously the body which was made to suit the conditions of this world, cannot be of any use in the next. Secondly, although the material body will perish, the soul will nevertheless be given a new body appropriate for its next abode. Thus man will once again be a combination of body and soul. Thirdly, it is not true to say that 'life after death' is just a figment of human imagination. It is a reality. It is established by the Holy Quran that our real life begins, not here on the earth, but in the next world—the world after death. In fact, our present existence, compared with 'life after death' is like a dream. It will be a greater reality than our present life. Our feelings and reactions in the life hereafter will be far more intensive. It is, therefore, not true to comjecture that 'life after death' would be only of the nature of a dream. Life in the hereafter is an essential corollary of the belief in the existence of God; because one cannot have the belief that there is a God and, at the same time, deny the Day of Reckoning. As God Almighty in the words of Prophet Noah (peace be on him) has said: What is the matter with you that you expect not wisdom and staidness from Allah? (71 : 14). So, to believe in God with all His powers, necessarily leads one to conclude that He has not made man and this world without purpose; and that this life will be followed by another in which this Divine purpose will be finally achieved. The object of man's life is that he may perfect himself and imbibe in his person all the attributes of God.

This is an unending task because God's attributes are innumerable and their expressions are not confined to this material world alone. Consequently it is impossible to achieve perfection in this world. Life can only be perfected in the world hereafter. Explaining this aspect of creation in a number of ways in several verses in the Holy Quran, God Almighty has said :

And We have not created the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the view of those who disbelieve. Woe, then, to the disbelievers because of the Fire (38 : 28).

And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in play. (21 : 17).

We created them not but with the requirements of truth and *justice*, but most of them understand not (Chap : ibid, V 40).

Have you not seen that Allah has pressed for you into service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and has completed His favours to you, both external and internal ! And among men there are some who dispute about Allah, without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening scripture. (31 : 21).

And He has also subjected to you the sun and the moon, both performing their work constantly. And He has subjected to you the night as well as the day. (14 : 34).

'Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us ?' (23 : 116).

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And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me (51 : 57).

Consequently to believe in the existence of God one has to believe in life afrer death. God's purpose cannot be defeated and since God has created this world for a purpose, it must surely be fulfilled. If this purpose cannot be fulfilled in this life, it must be fulfilled in the next. It is primarily to achieve this object that God has created 'Life' and 'death'. He says :

He originates the creation, then He reproduces it, that He

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may reward those who believe and do good works, with equity (10 : 5). God is the master of both the beginning and the end of creation and those who accept His will and do good deeds are repaid with equity. There are several aspects of this question of repayment with justice. We know from our own experience that not all good or bad deeds are rewarded with due justice. Complete reward in terms of absolute justice comes about only after death. Justice should not only be done, it should also appear to have been done, so that people may have a feeling of satisfaction. But Divine justice is not always apparent in this world. This can be seen only in the life hereafter ; and the Holy Quran has pointed out this aspect several times. On what grounds do the disbelievers say that there shall be no life after death ? The Holy Quran answers this in their own words :

"There is no life other than our present life; we were lifeless and *now* we live, but we shall not be raised again" (23 : 38). According to the Holy Quran the reason for the denial of 'life after death' by non-believers is that their minds are not prepared to accept that they would in any way be answerable to God. They cannot even account for their existence. They say : 'we have somehow or the other come into this world, but here again restrictions are being imposed on us that we will have to do good deeds and to abide by set principles and that ultimately we will have to bear responsibility for our actions in this life. This is too much. Having come into existence we are free to spend our lives as we choose. The real reason why they refuse to accept any responsibility and loath being questioned about the way they passed their life on earth is that they are arrogant. They scorn to think that having been through life once they would still be under subordination in the life hereafter and that someone would again rule over them-they do not wish this to happen'. When they are told that God says so, they say : this is irrational ; our forefathers too were told similar things ; we are not prepared to believe in these superstitions. In the Holy Quran God says :

And as to those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts

are strangers to truth and they are full of pride (16 : 23). Again in Surah Maryam the Holy Quran says: Man questions: when I will die, will I be brought back to life? God answers:

Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was naught (19 : 68).

There are several verses in the Holy Quran which contradict the non-believers' view about life after death. One of these says:

And they say, 'When we shall have become bones and broken particles, shall we be really raised up as a new creation?'

Say, 'Be ye stones or steel or created matter of *any kind* which appears hardest in your minds, *even then shall you be raised.*' Then they will ask 'Who will restore us to life?' Say, He, Who created you the first time'. (17 : 50-52).

Other verses which deal with this aspect are:

(1) And they say, 'What! when we are lost in the earth shall we then become a new creation?' Nay, but they are disbelieving in the meeting with their Lord. (32 : 11)

(2) And if thou dost wonder, then wondrous is their saying: 'What! when we have become dust, shall we then be in a *state of* new creation?' These it is who disbelieve in their Lord (13 : 6).

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(3) And those who disbelieve say, 'What when we and our fathers have become dust, shall we be brought forth *again?*

We were surely promised this before-we and our fathers: this is nothing but stories of the ancients.' (27 : 68-69)

(4) But they wonder that there has come to them a Warner from among themselves. And the disbelievers say, 'This is a strange thing!

'What! when we are dead and have become dust, *shall we be raised to life again?* That is a return far from possible. (50 : 3-4)

From these verses it is quite clear that the non-believers doubt that they will be brought back to life after their bodies have been burried and turned to dust. What amazes them most is the reassembling of their bodies from the particles of dust. They forget that nothing is impossible with God. If the law of God had been this; and if God had wanted it thus, He would have surely arranged so; but His intention is different. Our bodies will be of a new and different shape from our present bodies. There is no question of return to life of this earthly body. Resurrection will not bring this material body to life; it shall take place with another body. God says in the Quran:

"Have they not seen that Allah Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has the power to give life to the dead? Yes, verily He has power over all things." (46 : 34)

In suppport of life after death God has given some very cogent reasons. He says:

Does not man see that We have created him from a *mere* sperm-drop? Yet lo! he is an open quarreller!

And he coins similitudes for Us and forgets his own creation. He says, 'Who can quicken the bones when they are decayed?'

Say, 'He Who created them the first time, will quicken them'; and He knows every *kind of* creation full well.

'He Who produces fire out of the green tree, and behold, you kindle from it.

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Has not He Who created the heavens and the earch the power to create the like of them?' Yes, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, the All Knowing." (36 ; 78-82)

Thus it is pointed out that one should ponder first the miracle of life, of how the bones, which turn to dust were made. When one has pondered this miracle then the second miracle, that is, the revival of the dead will become clear. He is the same God Who has created the heavens and the earth. Is He

not capable of a new creation? If He can create trees from tiny seeds which sprout into mighty trunks and branches, then blossom and bring forth fruit, then surely He can also quicken the dead. It is God Who has bestowed, in a thing born of water, the capacity to burn. Then ponder awhile on your own creation and you will come to the conclusion that the second creation is no more amazing than the miracle of first life. He has, as in the green tree, posited yet another potential for life after death, when like the withered tree, the first life ends and a new life from its seed begins—God possesses perfect knowledge of every kind of creation and having created the heavens and the earth, is He not capable of creating their likes? He is the sole Creator.

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in his book entitled "Surma-i-Chashm-i-Arya", addressed to the Arya Samajists of the Hindu nation of India, who believe in the co-eternity of soul and matter with God, said: 'You, who say God cannot be the creator of matter and soul, deny, one by one, all the attributes of God; at first, you deny His Omnipotence then you deny His attribute of Omniscience". Says God: He has perpect knowledge of every type of creation. He is the all-knowing Creator.

The Sect obviously failed to understand that the denial of God's creation of soul and matter means denial of His omniscience, for knowledge is power. And if God is all-Knowing then surely He is capable of creating other universes like the one He has already made. This should explain the question of second creation-the life in the hereafter.

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These are answers to the question of non-believers, "Who will create them a second time and how?"

The Holy Quran invites attention again and again to creation of life from sperm. This also carries with it a significance. For example, God says:

O people, if you are in doubt concerning the resurrection, *then consider that* we have indeed created you from dust, then

from a sperm-drop, then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may make *Our power* manifest to you. And We cause what we will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term; then we bring you forth as babes; then *we rear you* that you may attain to your *age of full* vigor. And there are some of you who are caused to die *prematurely*, and there are others among you who are driven to the worst part of life *with the result* that they know nothing after *having had* knowledge. And thou seest the earth lifeless, but when we send down water thereon,it stirs and swells, and grows every kind of beauteous vegetation.

That is because Allah is the Truth, and that it is He Who brings the dead to life, and that He has power over all things. (22 : 6-7)

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That is, if you have doubts about life after death-and it is rather difficult for your minds to accept this dogma-then ponder wherefrom your existing life has emerged? First from earth; and subsequently from sperm. It is not that God picked up bones from somewhere, joined them into a skeleton and then blew life into it and lo! man was created. In exactly the same way and as a result of complicated processes in the human body an element takes shape in which is laid the foundation of man's future life. This in itself is a wonderful miracle. In only the tiniest drop of this element, which cannot be seen by the naked eye is laid the foundation of man's life. It is impossible for the human mind to comprehend this miracle. The life of man starts from such an insignificant thing, which according to scientists, contains in itself the essence of all the faculties inherited by man from his ancestors. God, in His great wisdom, keeps the element (sperm) in the womb until such time as He thinks fit for it to develop into an embyro. This then, is the chain of processes towards which attention is drawn again and again. In other words man has been told to ponder on his birth-his first creation; and then only will he be able to understand the miracle of his second creation. This is a very clear example which would bring closer

to human understanding the relationship of this life with the hereafter.

In order to bring out more clearly the relationship between life after death and this worldly life, the Holy Quran has given another example-the example of the rain. It says:

And thou seest the earth lifeless, but when We send down water thereon, it stirs and swells, and grows every kind of beauteous vegetation.

That is because Allah is the Truth, and that verily He brings the dead to life, and that He has power over all things. (22:6-7)

Don't you see that when the earth is parched and looks dead, water rises into the air as vapour and God gathers it into clouds in the sky and takes these to where they are needed by the aid of strong winds; and the rain once again revives the parched earth which in turn brings forth all manner of green vegetation.

This theme has been stated in the following other verses:-

He brings forth the living from the dead, and He brings forth the dead from the living; and He gives life to the earth after its death. And in like manner shall you be brought forth. (30 : 20)

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Look, therefore, at [the signs of Allah's mercy-how He quickens the earth after its death. Verily, the same God will quicken the dead, for He has power over all things. (30 : 51)

And Allah it is Who sends the winds which raise the clouds; then do We drive them to a lifeless tract of land, and quicken thereby the earth after its death. Likewise *shall* the Resurrection be. (35 : 10)

And among His signs is *this* that thou seest the earth *lying* withered, but when We send down water on it, it stirs and swells *with verdure.* Surely, He Who quickens the dead, verily He has power over all things. (41 : 40)

And Who sends down water from the sky in proper measure, and We thereby quicken a dead land :- even so will you be raised (43 : 12)

And He it is Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy, till when they bear a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead land, then We send down water therefrom, and We bring forth therewith fruits of every kind. In like manner do We bring forth the dead so that you may remember. (7 : 58)

Relationship of body and soul

The answer to the question how the soul after separation from this material body retains its existence and carries on according to the deeds performed in this world, is made clear by an illustration about sleep. It is said :

Allah takes away the souls of human beings at the time of their death, and during their sleep of those *also* that are not *yet* dead. And then He retains those for which He has decreed death, and sends *back* the others till an appointed term. In that surely there are signs for a people who reflect. (39 : 43)

It is clear from this verse that in sleep man undergoes a certain kind of death, with the difference that from this sleep he wakes up again, but from death, there is no return, at least not in this life. It is said :

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"Verily in this, there are many a sign for those who ponder". If we stop to think over the state of a sleeping man, we realise that in the state of sleep, the body, except for the motion of breathing, remains quite still, yet the man is often subject to many new and strange experiences and reactions both good and bad. Sometimes these experiences may be of such a nature that the man awakens quivering in fear. From this it is obvious that man can experience things in which his body plays no part. Often these experiences in which the body has played no part, leave behind a permanent mark.

Then there is another kind of experience called 'Roya' (vision) and 'Kashf' (revelation), which are gifts granted by God Almighty. Man experiences these also without the aid of the body. These often become the means of Divine guidance and sources of knowledge. To a man who is not convinced of a second life after death even after so many illustrations, God Almighty gives a warning :

Ruin seize the man ! how ungrateful he is !
Of what did He create him ?
Of a sperm-drop ! He creates him and proportions him,
Then He makes the Way easy for him,
Then He causes him to die and assigns a grave to him;
Then, when He pleases, He will raise him again.
(79 : 18-23)

After death God will keep him in a grave. By this it is not meant the grave in which the body is usually burried, but the transitional state in which the soul is kept after separation from the body. This transitional stage is given to every man after death, whether he is burried, cremated, drowned in the sea or even if his remains are scattered over the earth. Thus no matter how the body is disposed of, the soul of the departed is given a temporary abode. The torture of the grave relates to this stage. This is a phase of the soul similar to phase through which the embryo passes in the womb of the mother to develop and acquire the faculties needed by it for this life. Just as the embryo is made to develop and granted a body and a soul, similarly, human souls, after death, pass through a state called '*Barzakh*' in Arabic wherein they acqulre new bodies as well as faculties capable of reacting and responding to the new stimuli which they have been destined to receive in the life to come. This is the meaning of Resurrection. Says the Holy Quran :

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And behind them is a barrier until the day when they

shall be raised again.

(23 : 101)

Now it is clear that after death there runs a life cycle which is parallel to this life. Again and again, the Holy Quran says : 'Why do not people ponder on their present life ?' Just as God created them in the first instance, so will He again. As the bones and the flesh were created in the womb after a certain predetermined period through a long chain of processes whereby out of the food which the earth brings forth was prepared the sperm which took its abode in the uterus of women, thereafter it turned into solidified blood, then into bones which were clothed with flesh. In this very way the soul would be used as sperm. It will be given a temporary abode, a body, which will then get another soul, to lead a life of action hereafter. This soul will also have its limbs and its organs, but these limbs and organs would be such as would suit the new life, just as the present limbs and body are appropriate for this life. At the time of Resurrection man will come to life with all his limbs, which he would have secured for himself, during the transitional period (A'lam-e-Barzakh), according to his actions performed in his first life. Here it must be remembered that just as in this world the soul develops out of the body itself and threafter the child takes birth, in the same way the powers and the capabilities of the soul would take shape and develop during the transitional period into another soul. God Almighty says :

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As 'We began the first creation, so shall We repeat it-a promise *binding* upon us ; We shall certainly perform it.

(21 : 105)

For the creation and sustenance of soul a body is an essential prerequisite. After death, the soul gets a body according to a man's deeds in this world. Then from within this soul through the transitional development will emerge another more developed soul capable of appreciating the glory of its Lord. But even

in this transitional period the former shall not be without understanding or feelings howsoever inadequate and dormant these may be. That is why it is said that at the beginning of the second life men would say :

> 'O ! woe to us ! who has raised us from our place. (36 : 53)

A glimpse of the second life has also been given to us in Chap : 16 Al-Nahl, Verses 29-30 :

"Those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging their souls. Then will they offer submission, *saying*, 'We used not to do any evil,' Nay surely Allah knows well what you used to do.

So enter the gates of Hell, to abide therein. Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant."

Again in the same chapter, verse 33 :

> "Those whom angels cause to die while they are pure. They say : 'Peace be unto you ! Enter Heaven because of what you used to do." (Al-Nahl 33)

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Once this subject is properly understood I am sure man can free himself from sin. Gradually as he gains in understanding he begins to lead a pure life.

Every action of a man as indicated above, leaves behind an imprint. Our mode of life either develops the soul, exalts and purifies it or destroys it altogether. Everyone of us therefore, determines the nature of his own life after death,. The man who protects his spiritual eyesight and seeks to develop and perfect it, will be better able to look upon the face of his Maker and upon all the wonderful sights of Heaven. He will rightfully enjoy the rewards of his righteousness on earth. For the man, who is spiritually blind in this world, and does not seek to perfect his spiritual sight the beauties of Heaven or the sight of his Maker will be a source of acute pain. In other

words, God's wrath will be upon him. As for instance, a man with a healthy eyesight enjoys seeing beautiful scenes in bright sunshine whereas a man with sore eyes is tormented by the same. Same is the case with the faculty of taste. If there are blisters on the tongue of a person, howsoever tasty dishes might be placed before him he is unable to enjoy them, rather he will feel acute pain if he were compelled to partake of such food. On the contrary, a man with a healthy tongue and faculty of taste will relish them greatly. Thus the very objects which cause pain and suffering to those with diseased spiritual limbs will be sources of pleasure and ecstasy to persons possessing healthy spiritual faculties.

It follows that the man who strives to keep his soul pure and chaste and develops his spiritual being, will be building for himself a wonderful abode in the next world. Says the Holy Quran :

He indeed *truly* prospers who purifies it,
And he who corrupts it is ruined.

(91 : 10-11)

Hence the nature of our life after death depends entirely on our deeds in this world. The Holy Quran gives several examples :

But whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter, and even further astray from the way. (17 : 73)

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Here it is not meant that the man who unfortunately does not possess physical eyesight will be blind in the Hereafter too. What is meant is that the man who has blinded himself spiritually in this life will not be able to see the beauty of the hereafter. Again, it says :

But the fact is that it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that are blind.

(22 : 47)

This point has been brought out in several other verses.

It is these whom Allah curses so that He makes their ears deaf and makes their eyes blind. (47 : 24)

Now in this verse too, it is obvious that physical eyesight and power of hearing are not meant. What is meant is the spiritual power of seeing and hearing. Again it is said the inmates of Hell would say :

'If we had but listened or possessed sense, we should not have been the inmates of the blazing Fire (67 : 11)

These are the people who begin their second lives with their spiritual powers and capabilities terribly stunted. This is the state which has been given the name of Hell, as is written :

Verily, he who comes to his Lord a sinner—for him is Hell ; he shall neither die therein nor live. (20 : 75)

From this verse it is meant that they would not escape punishment, because their spiritual senses, though blunt, will not have become completely dead. Nor can they be termed as living in the true sense of the word. They would continue to suffer for having misused their powers and faculties and can thus neither be counted amongst the dead nor amongst the living, for life is a condition of bliss whereas their state will be one of acute spiritual agony.

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Again it is said :

'He who comes to Him as a believer having done good deeds for such are the highest ranks :

Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will abide therein *for ever*. And that is the recompense of those who keep themselves pure.'

In short, in consequence of man's deeds an aide-memoire is recorded in his soul, complete with all details, which would determine the happiness or otherwise of his future life. This aide-memoire is endowed with the capacity to control all reactions of the human soul and can thus turn future life into heaven or hell. It is the account of the deeds of a man

and acts both as a guardian angel and a reckoner.

And every man's works have We fastened to his neck; and on the day of Resurrection We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open.

'Read thy book. Sufficient is thy own soul this day as reckoner against thee.' (17 : 14-15)

Similarly, man's deeds, big or small, will all be kept safely and faithfully recorded in this aide-memoire. Says the Holy Quran :

And the Book will be placed before them and thou wilt see the guilty fearful of that which is therein ; and they will say 'O woe to us ! what kind of a book is this ! It leaves out nothing small or big but has recorded it." (18 : 50)

And they will find all that they did confronting.

In other words, man's skin, his hands, his tongue, his eyes, in short, all his limbs keep a faithful record of his deeds; and in the life after death no man shall escape reckoning except he whom God Almighty, out of His sheer mercy, may choose to pardon. Thus God says :

Those are they from whom We accept their good works and overlook their bad deeds. They shall be among the inmates of the Garden of Heaven, in fulfilment of the true promise which was made them. (46 : 17)

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And again He says :

Except those who repent, and believe and do good deeds; for as to these Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (25 : 71)

Till, when they reach it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they had been doing.

And they will say to their skins, 'Why bear ye witness against us?' They will say : 'Allah has made us speak as He

has made everything *else* speak. And He it is Who created you the first time, and unto Him have you been brought back.

And you did not fear *while committing sins* that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you, nay, you thought that *even* Allah did not know much of what you used to do.

'And that thought of yours, which you entertained concerning your Lord, has ruined you. So now you have become of those who are lost. (41 : 21-24)

If a man lives his life "in the sight of God" to quote from the Bible, that is, if he feels that he is in the presence of God, then whether alone or in company, he can never indulge in sinful deeds.

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The Testimony of Scienee.

Science also bears witness to the existence of these aide-memoire imprints. I think science has made faith (Iman) much easier to accept so much so that a time may come when there will not remain much in faith which cannot be scientifically proved. And when something becomes obvious there is no virtue in believing in it. The discoveries that have come out during the last two years have revealed that in the human brain a complete aide-memoire gets prepared and is kept safely preserved. A patient of epilepsy was being operated upon. In order to find out how the malady had developed, the doctors, before opening up his brain, had given him local anesthesia so that, he may not feel any pain. When they opened up his brain, the patient was in his senses. The doctor was applying electrodes at various parts of his brain with a view to finding out the reactions which the touch produced. At the same time the patient was told to keep narrating to the doctors whatever he felt or experienced. When at one point the patient said that he was experiencing all those symptoms he felt at the time of the attack of epilepsy, the doctors inferred that that particular place was the centre of his disease. The

patient described an incident which took place 18 years ago. On enquiry it was found to be true. Thus if the physical brain can keep record of all happenings of this material world why cannot the spiritnal brain keep safe all the incidents of a man's life.

For the God-fearing, the doors of Heaven will be laid open and the angels will give them glad tidings that they have secured a state of happiness and that they may go on reaping the rewards of their goodness. They will make their abode wherever they might like ; where all their reactions will be full of joy and their souls will continue acquiring higher and higher virtues. As it is said :

And those who feared their Lord will be conducted to Heaven in groups until, when they reach it, and its gates are opened, and its Keepers say to them 'Peace be upon you ! be ye happy, and enter it abiding *therein*.'

And they will say 'All praise belongs to Allah, Who has fulfilled His promise to us, and has given us the land for an inheritance, making our abode in the Garden wherever we please. 'How excellent then is the reward of the *righteous* workers ?

(39 : 74-75)

Similarly God has given glad tidings about the righteous by saying :

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We will forgive their trespasses so that their memories may not become a source of spiritual anguish for them. Thus they will go on spending their lives in happiness. It is appropriate to mention that Heaven will be a world by itself and will be as real as this world. It can be achieved by making proper and full use of the faculties granted to us by God.

Describing the Heaven, God says :

Vie with one another in seeking forgiveness from your Lord and for a Garden the value whereof is equal to the value of heaven and earth. (57 : 22)

This verse points out the dimensions of the Garden; that it will be a world by itself. Secondly that it will be as real as this world.

With regard to the dimensions of Heaven I may narrate here a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. A companion had enquired of the Prophet that if the Heaven was as big as the whole of this world, then where will Hell be located, and how? In answer the Prophet said 'when the day breaks where does the night go? meaning thereby that Heaven and Hell are two different conditions of the soul rather than of space. For day means the light of God and night means the absence of it. Heaven (Garden) would mean that the soul with regard to its faculties will be capable of accepting the rewards of God and Hell would mean that the soul has no light and is painfully groping in darkness. Heaven and Hell are not physical entities so that we can indicate the end of one and the beginning of the other. In the Holy Quran it is stated that people in Heaven could look at the people in Hell. It does not mean that people will take joy-rides to see those in Hell; but what is meant is that they will be aware of the state of people in Hell. Again, the rewards and bounties of Heaven will be recognised by the righteous and they will feel as if they had tasted of those bonnties before as it is said:

Whenever they are given a portion of fruit therefrom they will say 'This is what was given us before' and gifts mutually resembling shall be brought to them. (2 : 26)

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These bounties of Heaven are variously described in the Holy Quran in metaphors. They have been likened to delicious fruits, to quote one instance. To describe the consequences of one's deeds by fruits is a common metaphor in Urdu language too. We say, for example, that 'he has reaped the fruit of his deeds'. Another figurative term used in the Quran is 'game', as has been said:

And flesh of birds as they may desire. (56 : 22)

Again it says :

And every defaulter will find his 'Tair' (literally 'bird') attached to his neck.

'Bird' here is used in the meaning of deeds. This figurative language has been used to describe 'Heaven' and 'Hell' so as to bring their significance nearer to our understanding. Their reality however can only be inferred from these metaphors just as we interpret our true dreams. For example, 'water' is interpreted as 'life', 'milk' as 'spiritual knowledge and understanding'; 'wine' as 'love of God' and 'honey' as the 'yearning of the human soul for its Creator'. Now there will be every kind of fruit in Heaven and means of attaining forgiveness of God, as has been said :

A description of the Garden promised to the righteous : Therein are rivers of water which corrupts not ; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not, and rivers of wine, a delight to those who drink, and rivers of clarified honey. And in it will they have all *kinds* of fruits and forgiveness from their Lord. (47 : 16)

Of Hell it is said that the fire which will burn the arrogant and disobedient will ride on their hearts.

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he shall surely be cast into the crushing punishment ? And what should make thee know what the crushing punishment is ? It is Allah's kindled fire. (104 : 5-7)

Then in the Holy Quran it is said : The Hell will have seven gates. The word 'seven' stands for plurality. It can also mean the seven senses through the testimony of which wrong doers would be declared 'guilty'. For instance :

1. *By the faculty of seeing*, as it is said :

And if those who transgressed could now see the time when they shall see the punishment, they would realize that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishing. (2 : 166)

(2) *By the sense of hearing*, as is said :

When it sees them from a place far off, they will hear it raging and roaring. (25 : 13)

(3) *By means of tasting and drinking*, as is said :

Before him is Hell; and he shall be made to drink boiling water.

He shall sip it and shall not be able to swallow it easily. And death shall come to him from every *quarter*, yet he shall not die. And besides that there shall be for him a severe chastisement. (14 : 17-18)

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(4) *By the sense of feeling hot and cold, as is said :*

They will taste therein neither sleep nor drink,
Save boiling water and a stinking fluid - a meet requittal.
(78 : 25-27)

(5) *By means of hunger*, as is said :

They will have no food save dry, bitter and thorny herbage which will neither fatten nor satisfy hunger. (88 : 7-8)

(6) *By the sense of touch*, as is said :

They shall have a bed of Hell, and over them coverings *of the* same, And thus do We requite the unjust. (7 : 42)

(7) *By the feeling of suffocation*, as is said :

And when they are thrown into a narrow place thereof, chained together, they will pray for destruction (which in English is called 'clausterphobia') (25 : 14)

As against this, for 'Heaven' it is said :

They will not hear therein any vain or sinful talk,
But *only* the word of *salutation*, Peace, peace'.

They will not undergo the excesses of weather ; it has been said :

They will see there neither excessive heat nor excessive cold. (76 : 14)

They will be provided with pleasant drinks, as is said :

And their Lord will give them to drink pure beverage. (76 : 22)

They will enjoy the beautiful scenery of gardens and springs.

Verily, the righteous will be placed in gardens and by fountains. (15 : 46)

They will not get tired.

Fatigue shall not touch them there. (15 : 49)

They will get the solace of heart and every kind of gift.

Then for him is the comfort and fragrance and a Garden of bliss. (56 : 90)

They will have a feeling of pleasure and freshness in all matters.

And We will grant them cheerfulness and happiness. (76 : 12)

From their faces the freshness of the gifts of Heaven would be discernible.

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Thou wilt find in their faces the freshness of bliss. (83 : 45)

These people will be fortunate to have audience with God ; and because of this, their faces will look fresh.

Some faces on that day will be bright,

Looking eagerly towards their Lord ; (75 : 13, 24)

And above all, they will be the recipients of the gift of God's Pleasure.

Say, 'Shall I inform you of something better than that?' For those who fear God, there are Gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow ; therein shall they abide ; and pure spouses and Allah's pleasure. And Allah is Mindful of His servants. (3 : 16)

Again it is said :

And in the Hereafter there is.....*also* forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. (57 : 21)

Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him. and of His pleasure. (9 : 21)

And the pleasure of Allah is the greatest of all. That is the supreme triumph. (9 : 72)

Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him. (58 : 23)

And thou, O soul at peace !

Return to thy Lord well pleased *with Him* and He, well pleased *with thee.*

So enter thou among My servants,

And enter thou My Garden. (89 : 28-31)

Are Heaven and Hell Permanent ?

On this question different religions hold different views. Some religions put forth the view that just as Heaven is permanent retribution will also be permanent; those who will be thrown into Hell will never get out of it. Others say that both are temporary: a man after getting salvation again loses it and keeps going from one life into another.

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Heaven is Eternal.

The Holy Quran teaches that Paradise is everlasting and Hell is of short duration. The relevant verses are :—

Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him, and of His pleasure and of Gardens where there shall be *lasting* bliss for them. (9 : 21)

Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will abide, and delightful dwelling places in Gardens of *Eternity.* And the pleasure of Allah is the greatest of all. That is the supreme triumph. (9 : 72)

He has prepared for them Gardens beneath which flow rivers. They will abide therein *for ever.* (9 : 100)

Surely those who believe and do good deeds, will have Gardens of Paradise for an abode, wherein they will abide ; they will not desire any change therefrom. (11 : 108, 9)

There could be only two possibilities in the matter of Paradise ; either it is for a limited duration, after which it will be closed and the inhabitants ordered to quit or it is everlasting, but the inmates get tired of it and may prefer a change. Both these possibilities are denied ; the first by declaring again and again that Heaven is everlasting, and the second by saying that the condition of bliss in Heaven will be so varied and interesting that the occupants will love to stay on for ever. To conclude,

Heaven with all its rewards is eternal.

Hell is of limited duration

The following verses from the Holy Quran throw some light on the temporary nature of 'Hell' :—

I will inflict My punishment on whom I will; but My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who act righteously. (7 : 157)

As for those who will prove unfortunate, they shall be in the Fire, wherin there shall be for them, sighing and sobbing.

Abiding there in so long as the heavens and the earth endure, excepting what thy Lord may will. Surely, thy Lord does bring about what He pleases.

But as for those who will prove fortunate, they shall be in Heaven; abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, excepting what thy Lord may will—a gift that shall not be cut off. (11 : 107, 109)

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The situation of both the sinners and the righteous is described in these verses. Those who merit Heaven will stay in Heaven and those who deserve Hell will be made to live in Hell as long as heaven & earth endure. The sinners may be pardoned and taken out of Hell, but the dwellers of Heaven will stay on for ever as implied in the above verses which describe Heaven as an unending blessing of the Lord. It is true that in many verses in the Holy Quran, the word '*khuld*' has been used to convey the duration of stay in Hell (for example, Chap : 43 Al-Zukhraf, V : 23; Chapter 9 Al-Taubah, V : 17; Chap : 33, Al:Ahzab, V : 44; Chapter 2 Al-Baqarah, Vs : 87 and 168). This Arabic word means 'a long time', whether eternal or otherwise. Thus it means sinners will be in Hell for a long time and some for as long as it exists. 'Khuld', therefore, is applied to Hell in the above sense only and the length of stay in it cannot at all be compared with the eternity of Heaven, for it is said in Chapter 78 Al-Naba, V : 24 that the sinners will linger on in Hell for 'ages', thereby clearly indicating the long but finite duration of its existence. It means that the sinners will be able to leave Hell in the end. They will suffer whatever punishment they deserve and though by themselves will

not be able to reduce it, yet God in His mercy may pardon them. As God's mercy encompasses everything, their punishment is bound to come to an end.

The Holy Quran teaches that man has been created to serve as manifestation of God's attributes and to illustrate them in his life. It says:

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me (i. e., serve me and receive the impress of my attributes). This Divine purpose of man's creation is bound to be fulfilled. If men do not fulfil this purpose in this life, they will be enabled to do so in the next, through the purifying effect of Hell, for God's punishment is purifying. Any punishment which does not lead to improved behaviour is not a good punishment. Since God is free from imperfection, His punishment cannot be defective. Thus when the inmates of Hell are purified, they will be transferred to Heaven and the purpose of creation will then have been truly fulfilled. It follows, therefore, that Hell is a reformatory. The Holy Prophet has said that a time will come when there will be no one in Hell and the morning breeze will blow gently at its doors. This of course does not mean that God's punishment is not severe and tormenting. Indeed its intensity will be such that even a short time will appear very long. And if it is actually imposed for a long time, as God's warning suggests, the fate of the wrong doers can be imagined. On the other hand, it is equally true to say that the punishment of Hell will terminate even if it takes millions and millions of years.

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Will Paradise be static?

Whether Paradise is static or a place of action and evolution, is an important question. The Holy Quran teaches us that there are gradations and stages of development in Heaven:

Their light will run before them and on their right hands, they will say, 'Our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us; surely thou hast power over all things. (65 : 9)

This does not mean that they are asking pardon for their sins. Their sins are pardoned as they are in Heaven already. All that is meant is that any obstacle in the way of their final perfection should be removed. Since the Divine purpose of man's creation is to enable him to serve as a manifestation of God's attributes and since there is no end to God's good attributes man will continue to improve and to develop. The Holy Quran says:

Every day He reveals Himself in a different state. (55:30)

If that is so, how can man's progress come to an end. In Heaven, therefore, there will be good deeds and the opportunity for attaining perfection and this will go on without any limit.

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